

# FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

45-87	Boston North	BT	BLM.157
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**Town/City:** Belmont

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):

**Address:** 291 Brighton Street

**Historic Name:** Thaddeus Frost House

**Uses:** Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

**Date of Construction:** 1827

**Source:** Betts, p. 255

**Style/Form:** Federal

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: granite, concrete

Wall/Trim: wood clapboards

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

garage (1946)

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

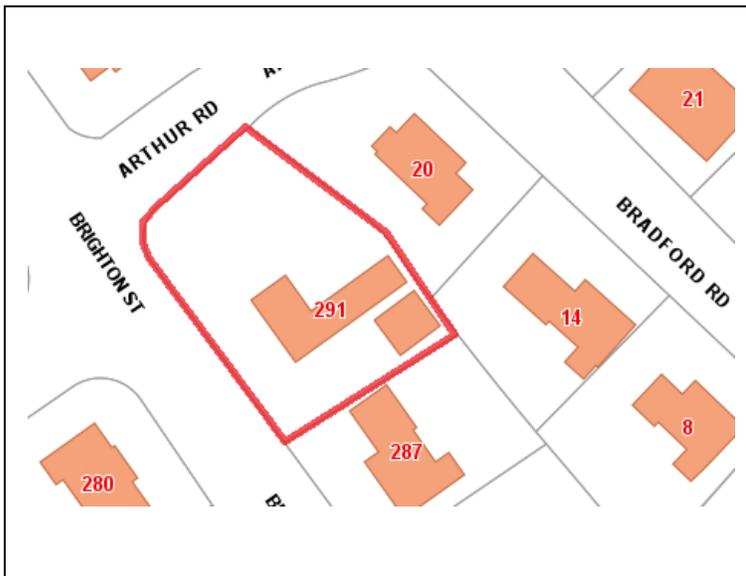
**Acreage:** 12,486 SF

**Setting:** former farmland now surrounded by post World War II houses

## Photograph



## Locus Map (north at top)



**Recorded by:** Lisa Mausolf

**Organization:** Belmont Historic District Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): July 2014

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

291 BRIGHTON STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

Located at the southeast corner of Brighton Street and Arthur Road, 271 Brighton Street is a 2 ½-story, 5 x 2 bay, side-gabled dwelling. The center entrance displays a modest Federal-style entry. The molded surround features a semi-elliptical arch spanning above the front door which is flanked by partial sidelights with small cornerblocks. The house is outlined by simple cornerboards and the eaves display shallow returns on the gable ends. The windows contain double-hung wooden sash in a six-over-six configuration, with molded surrounds and flanked by wooden shutters. Only the east chimney remains on the main block.

Extending behind the east part of the main house block is a two-story ell. There is a secondary entrance toward the rear of the east elevation. It is capped by a ca. 1870 door hood. According to research published by local historian Mrs. Frank French in 1973, the rear ell includes a fireplace with original crane and Dutch oven. A hardwood ice chest, dating from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and originally used to store produce to be sent to market was located in the kitchen at that time.

The house occupies a level lot with a 20<sup>th</sup> century picket fence extending along the Brighton Street and Arthur Road frontage. A paved driveway extends along the southeast side of the house, terminating at a two-car, side-gabled garage constructed in 1946.

The Thaddeus Frost House is significant as one of the few surviving examples of Federal-style residential construction in Belmont.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

This house is of interest for its associations with the locally-important Frost family as well as its associations with the market gardening industry active in the Winnbrook section of Belmont from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through World War II. The Frost family were early settlers who owned property in what is now Belmont back to the early 1700s. Thaddeus C. Frost (1796-1884) was born in Watertown, the son of Amos Frost and Lydia Bemis. He was also the nephew of Capt. Stephen Frost and the grandson of Capt. Ephraim Frost, both of whom were Revolutionary War heroes. Thaddeus was born in Cambridge and at the age of 11 became a member of the West Cambridge Musical Society.

Thaddeus Frost married Abigail Locke in 1827 and this house was built at that time. He was a farmer. The couple had six daughters and two sons. By the time of the 1880 Census Thaddeus was an 84-year old widower, living here with his son George, daughter Margaret, a nurse and several farm laborers. When Thaddeus Frost died in 1884 ownership of his sixteen acre parcel passed to his son, George A. Frost. After George Frost died in 1890, Varnum Frost purchased the property for \$3,500 at auction.

Cornelius and Isabella Bresnan bought the property in 1899 and continued the farming tradition. In 1910 the Census indicates that the couple was living here with their five children between the ages of 13 and 25, a sister-in-law, and three hired farm laborers. "Boston Market Celery" was cultivated on the site. Mrs. Bresnan died in 1931, followed by Mr. Bresnan in 1941.

Charles Trenholm, a local real estate man (Belmont Hill Trust) purchased the property in 1943. In 1944 Trenholm sold the house and 12,486 SF of land to Richard and Jessie Rablin (Book 6768, Page 405). Richard Rablin worked as a statistician. In 1945 and 1946 the Rablins filed a building permit for the construction of a two car garage to be built by Sam Alcock.

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The remainder of the original Thaddeus Frost farm was subdivided in 1946; Arthur Road was cut through in 1947. The Rablins owned the house at 291 Brighton Street until 1965 when it was purchased by Athena McInnis (Book 10872, Page 170).

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

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**National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form**

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible       Eligible **only** in a historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district       Potential historic district

Criteria:     **A**     **B**     **C**     **D**

Criteria Considerations:     **A**     **B**     **C**     **D**     **E**     **F**     **G**

Statement of Significance by       Lisa Mausolf        
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Thaddeus Frost House is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C on the local level. Under Criterion A, the house is significant for its associations with the locally prominent Frost family as well as its associations with the market gardening active in the Winnbrook section of Belmont from the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through World War II. Under Criterion C, the house is significant as one of the few surviving examples of Federal-style residential construction in Belmont.